



**Federal Aviation
Administration**

FOCUSFAA

It's All About You

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A Towering Legacy

When Gene Wise retires at the end of January, he'll leave a lasting legacy in the form of a 224-foot tower in Columbus, Ohio.

Wise was instrumental in drafting the plans for completing the erection of the new tower at Port Columbus International Airport. Wise's many skills as a support specialist were self-taught. Perhaps his most important attribute,



Gene Wise on the roof of the new tower with Columbus in the background.

however, is fortitude. He wrote the original staff study for the new tower in 1986. Four rewrites and 18 years later, Wise achieved success. "I've dealt with the federal process long enough I guess that I've learned some patience," he remarked.

"Gene was a very dynamic, experienced person who kept a lot of things going," said

Joseph Szanati, program manager for terminal platform in the Great Lakes Region. "He picked up a lot of loose ends."

Peter Ferris, technical operations manager at the Columbus System Service Center, said Wise took to heart the effort to build the new tower. "Managers, they come and go. Every new

A Towering Legacy

manager that came in, [Gene] tried to keep [the new tower issue] on the forefront.”

As a plans and procedures specialist, Wise developed talents for drafting letters of agreement with other facilities, learning standard operating procedures, airport master planning, noise studies, and computer training for new systems. Along the way he taught himself computer assisted design, a drafting and drawing program that allowed him to plot consoles and equipment layouts, and create many useful drawings and charts.

Teaching is in Wise’s blood. He taught an FAA-sponsored aviation course for years

at Ohio State University, a program was cancelled because of budgetary issues. That bothers Wise. “We give a lot of lip service to training and then don’t fund it,” he said. “The people who are going to take over my job are probably going to have to teach themselves some things.”

In building the new tower, issues that may seem mundane like selecting paint colors, placing dark tiles in the restrooms, and discussing various types and styles of furniture all had to be handled delicately. “We must have spent two or three months and several meetings” discussing furniture, Wise mused. “At

times it was exasperating.”

But Wise had promised himself that he would stay with the project until the end. The payoff was worth it.

“The day of the dedication, it was a good feeling,” said Wise. “I might even have had a tear in my eye.” ✈

Three's Company

When it comes to multitasking, Barbara Silva could well be FAA's queen.

As acting program director for the Logistics Center, Silva's job is to be available 24-7 to deal with crises affecting the National Airspace System (NAS). If she were to allow the unpredictability of her job to buffalo her, she'd probably never leave her office.

But this Christmas found Silva in Dallas visiting family. On Christmas Eve, she ventured out to the mall with her three young grandchildren to buy a birthday gift for their father. She hardly needed to describe the scene of weaving between last-minute shoppers and avoiding jammed store aisles while clutching the hand of her 2-year-old grandson,

Anthony, and trying to keep Gabriella, 7, and Ariana, 10, within eyesight.

Then her government phone rang. "I kind of thought, 'Oh, gosh, what is this?'" she recalled. It was the Logistic Center's customer care office notifying her of an inoperative radar in Nassau, Bahamas (*see "FAA Santa Visits Bahamas" under News for that story*).

Although there was no international agreement between the countries to provide maintenance on the radar, its operational failure was affecting the NAS. Another manager was patched into the call, making it a 3-way conversation in



Barbara Silva and her three grandchildren. Ariana is holding Anthony. Gabriella is at left.

the middle of a crowded mall. Silva remembered thinking, "Okay, we ruined [the manager's] day. I told

Three's Company

him to get off the line and I'd transition him in once we worked out the Headquarters coordination, but would give him a status report later."

Meantime, Nana is telling her grandchildren to keep their inside voices "real low" as they vied for her attention. "She's going to be on there forever," sighed Ariana.

Despite their ages, Gabriella and Ariana are not unfamiliar with their grandmother's busy life. "My grandchildren and I were discussing going on vacation this summer and the youngest one said, 'Will the office call you at the beach when we go on vacation, Nana?'" Silva recalled.

Silva still remembers being on the phone when the Boston radar went down on an Easter weekend. "We were preparing to go to Easter Vigil services when the phone calls came in, so my family went

off without me and I said I would keep the two youngest girls with me. While on the phone call with the National Operations Control Center, the youngest grandchild picked up a chocolate candy and was headed directly for the white linen tablecloth with two chocolate-covered fingers. The guys [on the phone] will forever tease me for saying, 'We can get the local National Guard to fly the equipment and crew to Boston and then — don't you dare touch that tablecloth with those fingers! — we can start the restoration process.'"

Back in the mall, the girls held up gift suggestions for their grandmother to consider, and she nodded at each. Unfortunately, she was nodding to the conversation on the telephone. "I was apologizing to people on the phone for the noise. They're apologizing too for calling me on leave, but we're

getting it done," said Silva. "I was only grateful that Marty [Goldenberg, Miami SMO manager] could hear me with the noise of the mall and last minute shoppers in the background."

The FAA restored the radar quickly. Little did desperate Bahamian officials realize that the start of the solution to their problem began with calls to Nana Silva in a Dallas shopping mall. Oh, and Dad got three nice gifts from his daughters.

For Silva, it was just another day's work. "Our folks are so responsive, we'd be in a real bad way if we couldn't set the tone and example for them," she said. "That's the operating norm of every employee at the Logistics Center. We have such great employees that they make things happen every time and our families are ever so patient and forgiving of the interruptions." ✈

The *Bahamas News* headline read:

“Chaos At Nassau Bahamas Airport.”

The story referred to a near-crisis caused when a radar — operated and maintained by Nassau — serving the airport quit operating, essentially closing the airport. What the story didn’t detail was the post-Christmas gift the FAA bestowed on its Caribbean neighbor.

Participating on this mission were Randy Mitchell, an engineering technician out of the Logistics Center in Oklahoma City; and Darrel Grouette, a radar technician from the Miami System Management Office (SMO). “We had two really good technicians,” said Marty Goldenberg, Miami SMO manager. “They’ve probably replaced 50 of these things between them.” They were supported by a number of “elves” from both facilities.

The technical Grinch was a failed rotary joint that kept the radar from spinning. The malfunction on Christmas day stranded 6,000 Bahamas-bound passengers on U.S. airstrips. Many of these tourists gamble on the island, spending big money in the Bahamas. “This [situation] was so hot, I actually got a call from the deputy minister of the Bahamas,” noted Goldenberg. Calls also came from the ministers of aviation and transportation. “They were in a panic,” he said.



The failure of an ASR-8 radar like the one above essentially shut down the airport in Nassau, Bahamas.

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Perhaps more important to FAA was the loss of surveillance data provided by the nonfunctioning radar, and the growing congestion in the Southeast United States airspace. FAA had to move fast.

Mitchell and Grouette got the call to duty. "It always terrifies me when I'm home like that and my supervisor calls," Mitchell chuckled. The rest of Christmas Day was spent making arrangements for the early morning trip the following day.

Meantime, a logistics team comprising Yuen Julio, Gary Howard, Jerri Carr, Rene Kifer, David Wolf and Barbara Silva sprang into action. They arranged for the needed part to be driven across country in 20 hours and loaded on a special charter flight for the Bahamas. Doug Walton in the Miami SMO and Archie Archilla in FAA's international office also played critical roles in the radar restoration.

**Randy Mitchell**

Mitchell's 7 a.m. flight from Oklahoma City to Orlando put him on a Delta jet bound for the Bahamas, where he circled the airport 1½ hours but never landed. Mitchell's flight returned to Miami for fuel, where it sat on the tarmac for another 1½ hours before returning to Orlando with no scheduled departure time set for the Bahamas. Goldenberg contacted Bahamian officials and they chartered a LearJet for Mitchell and Grouette the next day.

Mitchell and Grouette hoisted the 190-pound replacement rotary joint into place and repaired the radar in less than five hours, while instructing Bahamian technicians. Bahamas' minister of transportation has promised to send letters of recognition to Mitchell, Grouette and all FAA employees in Oklahoma City and Miami who gave up their holiday.

Mitchell received some reward for his work while standing in the customs line waiting to leave. Passengers were talking about how bad it's been. They were happy to be leaving. "I guess maybe it was a gift for some of them."

Was Mitchell tempted to reward himself with a few days in the Caribbean? "It would have been nice to stay a day or two, but I had other things to do. We've got a pretty busy January [at the Logistics Center]." It seems like this Santa's work is never done. ✈

A Towering Success

The recently constructed Port Columbus International Airport Tower

in Columbus, Ohio is aptly named, considering the project proved to be an important one of discovery for the Great Lakes Region and FAA as a whole.

The tower was commissioned on time and under budget. That's an accomplishment in itself, considering the project was fraught with the normal issues surrounding any complicated project: environmental concerns; state and local cooperation; political lobbying; budget constraints; and reconciling the needs and wants of the various groups building and occupying the structure.

The first hurdle was simply getting the project scheduled. Gene Wise, a support specialist at the tower, receives a lot of credit for keeping attention focused on the airport's needs (see *"A Towering Legacy"* in this issue's *People* section for more on Wise). "The FAA builds only so many towers a year, so you have to wait your turn," Wise said. Columbus' turn came after more than a decade of waiting.

By all accounts, the key to the project's success was the inclusion of representatives from all lines of business and the airport. A weeklong off-site meeting before



The tower is seen here, under construction.



Peter Ferris

A Towering Success



Gene Wise

the project started helped define each organization's roles and responsibilities.

"All the lines of business are involved in the siting process," said Joseph Szanati, program manager for terminal platform in the Great Lakes Region. "Before, it was just Air Traffic and Airways Facilities." A new siting order for another airport in the Great Lakes Region has been formalized based on FAA's experiences at Columbus.

Pete Ferris' suggestion to include airport representatives in on meetings "was kind of a different turn for the FAA," which did not have a history of including airports in on planning. "I felt we were going to be in their backyard," said Ferris, technical operations

manager at the Columbus System Service Center. "We needed them there. They were able to lobby [for the new tower]." That relationship likely came in handy when the environmental impact statement showed contamination problems on the site. Close work with attorneys from the state and city helped progress on the tower lease.

"This project represented a lot of firsts for [FAA] and the Great Lakes Region," said Scott Iwamoto, systems engineer in the terminal platform division of Great Lakes Region. His office studied and adopted some concepts originated by FAA's Canadian counterparts. The tower cab glass windows were installed at 30 degrees to cut down on reflection and help keep the cab windows dryer in the rain and snow. Only three columns

support the roof, compared to 12-16 mullions used in older towers. The columns are strategically located so as not to block controllers' views.

"We put some designs into the building that we wouldn't have put in" without suggestions from the team, said Ferris, who noted the advanced telecommunications integration that placed all of the tower's operational lines on the FAA's telecommunications infrastructure.

The task was complicated by the need to keep team chemistry going even as representatives moved on to other facilities or projects. "Trust had to be rebuilt again," said Szanati after each departure.

"Bringing everybody on board doesn't mean managing by

A Towering Success

committee,” said Iwamoto. “Joe’s area was financial. Sometimes the team thinks it has a say in that. That was [an attitude] that was very difficult to deal with,” he added.

As the project changed in scope and concept, Wise used self-taught computer assisted design to keep up with the changes. “It helps if you do a little bit of everything. A lot of this stuff overlaps. One thing leads to another,” he explained.

Compromises are always an important part of these projects. Collaborative tower design allows Technical Operations employees improved access to the equipment they must maintain. One tradeoff, however, might be a reduction in space for staff.

And some equipment had to be reinstalled two or three times as the project changed. “When you actually turn the switch, everything isn’t exactly the way you’re going to want it,” acknowledged Ferris. Nonetheless, he added, “It’s the nicest facility I’ve ever worked in.”

Iwamoto has brought several groups of visitors through the tower. “I said to Gene that all of us should be very proud of our accomplishments.” ✈



The new tower at Port Columbus International Airport.

When Ken Wong's grandchildren ask him about his job,

**he can tell them he played a key part
in the launch of a new industry.**

Wong, deputy manager of the licensing and safety division in the FAA's Office of Commercial Space Transportation, led the team that developed the recently announced proposed rule for commercial human space flight. The team included representatives from Flight Standards,

Aerospace Medicine, Rulemaking, Aviation Plans and Policy, and the Chief Counsel's office.

The success of SpaceShipOne, which captured the X Prize in October 2004, symbolically established the future of the space industry. Civilians now will be able to pay their way into orbit on



The success of SpaceShipOne has opened the door to commercial human space flight.

Launching A New Industry

commercial launch vehicles. That the industry holds great potential is evident in Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic project, which seeks to "make it possible for almost anyone to visit the final frontier at an affordable price."

Regular passenger space flights between cities could well be possible within decades. "By then it'll be more than an adventure ride or joyride," said Wong. "It'll be similar to point-to-point travel" like today's aviation industry, he added.

The fledgling nature of commercial human space flight makes Commercial Space Transportation's mission somewhat different from that of FAA's as a whole. Like its parent agency, Commercial Space Transportation's primary focus is safety. But Congress also has mandated that the office encourage, facilitate, and promote commercial space transportation.

Being on board a launch vehicle "is not the same as getting on an airplane," noted Wong. "It's more equivalent to the barnstorming days of aviation more than 70 years ago."



Ken Wong meets Mike Melville on the day of the first SpaceShipOne flight.

The proposed rule recognizes the inherent danger in any new transportation initiative of this type, and sets out to ensure safety of the uninvolved public without stifling the industry in its infancy. Because the commercial human space flight industry is in its early stages, the proposed rule is based on principles of informed consent and voluntary assumption of risk by passengers. The rule requires the launch company to inform passengers of the risk associated with the mission and that passengers acknowledge and consent to that risk in writing.

Launching A New Industry

The tough part of devising the rule was taking into account the different types of launch vehicles and missions being considered for commercial human space flight. “It’s difficult to come up with requirements to fit all of them,” Wong said. “Some commenters to the proposed rule may say that the proposed requirements are too stringent, while others may say they are not stringent enough.”

The rule also establishes certain training and qualification requirements for the flight crew and crewmembers. “The medical [aspect of rulemaking] sometimes can become a showstopper,” said Judi Citrenbaum, representing the Office of Aerospace Medicine on the rulemaking team. There are few precedents for the FAA to draw upon for its requirements. Citrenbaum said her office “borrowed” its second-class medical certificate requirement for pilots of space vehicles from the aviation industry. “We don’t have anything [to base our decision on] from the space world except for the full-

blown medical examinations that NASA astronauts might go through,” she said.

She noted that Mike Melville, who piloted the first SpaceShipOne flight, holds a second-class medical certificate. Holders of these certificates must meet 20/20 vision standards and have annual medical examinations.

Congress and Commercial Space Transportation recognize that regulations must evolve as the industry matures, requiring the FAA to implement a phased approach to regulate commercial human space flight. In the end, the hard work will have been worth it if space tourism takes off. Wong hopes one day he’ll be able to look back and say that he had the opportunity to help shape the future of commercial human space flight. ✈

Your Two Cents

Feedback

Oops!

Focus FAA misspelled KC Yanamura's name in the last issue ("Eating Humble Pie"). *Focus FAA* staff is enjoying a slice of humble pie right now.

MLK's Birthday

Focus FAA is interested in employees' thought about the most recent Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, the first since the passing of Civil Rights pioneer Rosa Parks.

Rosa Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. symbolize the unknown power or effect of an individual choice. They represent the proverbial straw that broke the proverbial back of racial prejudice. Rosa Parks, one of four black people asked to get up so one white male could sit, demonstrating that the minority view, the oddball, the lone voice may be the key to freedom. Dr. King's decision to participate as a leader in the Civil Rights Movement resulted in threats on his life, a Nobel Peace Prize and popularity immortalized. Today, both are recognized and idolized as icons of the Civil Rights Movement because of their individual choice.

Ralph Randall
Headquarters

Really Nice

You folks are doing a great job. The flash site, the animation, video streaming etc., all look really nice. You are helping us move into the 21st century at last.

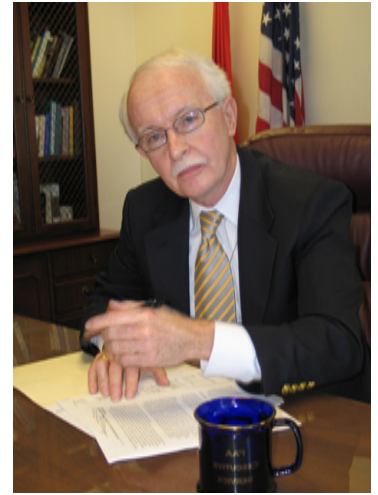
Keep up the good work. ✈

David Conley
Eastern Region



Now This

OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF DECADES, MY WIFE AND I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL AND SEE SOME SPECTACULAR SIGHTS AND SHARE MANY MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES.



We have walked the Great Wall of China, climbed an active volcano in Guatemala, toured the Potala Palace in Tibet, celebrated the millennium turnover at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, and walked the Cliffs of Mohr in Ireland on a beautiful, crystal clear day in June.

I have been in the presence of four presidents, shook hands with two of them. Earlier in my life, I had the honor of meeting Father Pedro Arrupe, S.J., head of the Jesuit

order, one of the most holy, revered public figures I have ever met.

Yet, through it all, the memory I cherish the most is having met and heard Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speak. It was the fall of 1965 and I was teaching at a Jesuit boarding high school in Prairie du Chien, Wis. A colleague and friend of mine had heard that Dr. King was going to be speaking in Davenport, Iowa, the next evening. So, the following day, after classes, we drove across

Now This

the Mississippi River into Iowa, and arrived in Davenport toward dusk. The event was an interfaith dinner with probably a couple hundred people in attendance.

When Dr. King got up to speak, I had to push my chair back so I could get a better view, putting myself in a twisted, cramped position. He spoke for maybe 15 minutes. When he finished, and as I returned my chair and myself to their regular positions, I felt a sharp twinge in my back. It had cramped up because I had not moved a muscle while he was speaking. He was that riveting, that mesmerizing.

Later, as the years went on, I realized even more what an honor it was to have met him and heard him speak. He was a giant — arguably the most important American of the last 50 years. He improved the lot of all Americans — not just

black but white Americans as well. Through his nonviolent approach he summoned the better angels of our nature and called America to its true self. I shudder when I think of what might have happened if the leadership of the Civil Rights Movement had fallen into the wrong hands. It would have ended in a bloodbath and set back the cause of Civil Rights for at least a generation.

Once again on Dr. King's birthday, I will quietly cherish my personal memory of him and remember with gratitude the legacy he left us all. ✈

Gerald E. Lavey

AOA HIGHLIGHTS

Note: Please keep in mind that links to some outside publications mentioned in AOA Highlights work for only a few days and after that many publications no longer provide free access.

Administrator Announces Pay Increase:

Administrator Blakey kicked off the new year with a “good news” announcement concerning employee pay and compensation. She took some political heat over this announcement, with the budget situation being as tight as it is already, and then further exacerbated by the 1 percent across the board rescission the Congress mandated for all Federal agencies. Politically, it would have easier not to grant a pay increase and keep the pay bands

where they are. But, she said the other day that she didn’t want to cut costs on the backs of employees while Federal employees in other agencies were getting automatic pay raises. Most of all, this would have adversely affected employees in the lower grades and bands, she said, and she didn’t think that was fair.

The pay raise involves a 3.1 percent Organizational Success Increase, effective January 8, for eligible employees under the Core Compensation Plan. Employees in the FG and FM pay systems, pending completion of negotiations over pay, will receive the same 2.1 percent increase as Federal GS employees, plus locality pay, as will employees in the executive

compensation plan. The Administrator also raised the pay bands under Core Compensation and initiated an independent review of the pay-for-performance system to make sure it is meeting the needs of employees and the agency. For more on this go to the [Pay section](#) of the employee site.

Bowen Named New Chief Information Officer (CIO):

On January 9, the [Administrator announced](#) that she had selected David Bowen as the new CIO and Assistant Administrator for Information Services.

Bowen replaces Dan Mehan, who left FAA at the end of September 2005. The Administrator made

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a special point of thanking Walter Iwanow for serving as interim CIO over the last three months, saying he did an outstanding job of keeping us on course.

As Senior Vice President and CIO of Blue Shield for the past five years, Bowen operated the company's IT department at more than 3 percent below budget. From 1998 to 2000, he was Senior Vice President for Information Management and CIO at Catholic Healthcare West, one of the largest not-for-profit healthcare systems in the U.S., with 48 hospitals in California, Arizona, and Nevada.

RNAV/RNP Featured in Latest FAA Webcast: Area navigation, commonly referred to

as RNAV — and RNP, shorthand for Required Navigation Performance — are getting increased attention, including more coverage by the aviation trade press. We taped a webcast interview recently with ATO's Jeff Williams, Program Director, RNAV/RNP Group, and John McGraw, Manager, Flight Technologies & Procedures Division, for AVS to discuss RNAV/RNP at a very basic level so that employees can understand what RNAV and RNP are all about. [Click here for a link to this webcast interview.](#)

In addition to the [Aviation Week & Space Technology](#) article on RNAV/RNP we cited a couple of weeks ago, the January issue of [Avionics](#) has a good article on the subject.

FAA and PASS Now Set For Contract Negotiations: We haven't said much about the FAA/PASS contract negotiations in recent weeks. The reason is that until just after the New Year, there was not much to talk about. FAA/PASS negotiations never really got out of the starting gate because we were at an impasse over the ground rules. So, the matter went to the Federal Service Impasse Panel (FSIP). On January 3, FSIP ruled in favor of the agency on the key element of setting a reasonable timeframe to conduct negotiations for a new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The FSIP ruled that the Parties shall conduct negotiations

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beginning on February 6, 2006 and conclude by July 21, 2006.

Latest Development in FAA/NATCA

Negotiations: The parties involved in the negotiations recently completed a negotiating round in New Orleans. The teams are off for a week and will resume talks in Washington on January 24.

Nice Try, But No Cigar: The *St. Petersburg Times* recently ran a [story about the blog](#) (“The Main Bang”) that NATCA President John Carr does for the NATCA site. The newspaper reports that Carr has copied material verbatim for that blog from other sources without providing the proper attribution. This has happened three times, according to

reporter Bill Adair.

Why is the newspaper reporting this? Because, as reporter Bill Adair notes, “Carr’s credibility is important because his union has been in contract negotiations with the FAA.” Why are we reporting this? For much the same reason. More importantly from our perspective, many of our employees in the ATO read this blog and we need to let them know what they are dealing with.

Carr has tried to distance himself from the charge of plagiarism saying he “is not a journalist” and therefore excused for not knowing about such things. Nice try, but that won’t fly. Anybody who

went to high school knows you don’t copy someone else’s material and call it your own. Call it plagiarism, call it what you will – it’s a no-no and you don’t need a degree in journalism to understand that.

Also last week, the *Washington Post’s* [In the Loop](#) column by Al Kamen quotes from one of Carr’s latest blog in which Carr discusses his attendance at the annual American Airport Association Executives conference in Hawaii. If Carr thinks the *St. Petersburg Times* will be a source of heartburn for him, he ain’t seen nothing yet, once he hears from the Hill.

AOA HIGHLIGHTS

The Last Word: At the January 9 executive staff meeting, the Administrator distributed to all executives detailed notes from the sessions conducted at the regional and center facilities following the November 15 Town Hall meeting. By far, the number one concern across all locations was “lack of communications.” Time and time again, employees made it clear that “absence of information creates anxiety, mistrust, and low morale. It also forces employees to pay attention to the rumor mill to fill the communication void.” In my opinion, one of our perennial problems is that instead of providing employees periodic updates on the progress of this or that initiative, we tend to wait until everything is

completed before divulging information. Meantime, the rumor mill cranks up and the anxiety, mistrust, and low morale mentioned above are sure to follow. In addition, other versions of events take hold while we’re dotting the “i’s” and crossing the “t’s” and then we’re relegated to triage and a catch-up mode.

On the entertainment front, the novel *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez is a good read. Woody Allen’s latest movie “Match Point,” also is good. Woody has had a series of clunkers recently, but this one is good.

January 16 is Martin Luther King, Jr’s birthday. All Americans owe him a great deal of gratitude.

Check out the editorial in this issue of Focus FAA with a personal reflection from yours truly on him. ✈

Gerald E. Lavey

**Deputy Assistant
Administrator for Internal
Communications**

The Wrong Brothers Invent Parachutes



"Hey, Bilbur... I have an idea."